THE CAYAPA INDIANS*

by

Max Heimann

101 In the far north west of the Ecuadorian Republic there is a river
131 named the Santiago. Near the village of Borbon it is joined by
133 one of its tributaries, the Cayapa River. The Cayapa Indians, a
161 harmless tribe consisting of no more than 2500 persons, live on the upper reaches of the Cayapa River and around its sources.

000 I have never been able to understand why they are called "uncivilized" and "savage." Would it be because they dress more simply, more comfortably, more suitably and cheaply than we European fashion slaves? Or would it be because they speak their own language, unknown to us, and because they do not know how to read and write and do not stuff their heads with the dead weight taught in schools and called "education"? Or even, would it be because they have other customs and manners as well as different moral concepts?

181 One thing is certain—the Cayapa are happy people, because they are more satisfied with their lot than we Europeans, who are so demanding and feel so superior with our conceit in our sham civilization, in the clothes prescribed for us by the tyrants of "fashion" and in the "wisdom" acquired in schools.

439 They frequently come to town in small groups of five to 20
484 persons. I have seen them many hundreds of times, but again and
142 again I am delighted when I meet these small, but well-built and sturdy [282] figures. The men are not taller than 150-160 cm. (Translator--5 ft. to 5ft. 4 in.), while the women are barely 140 cm. (Translator--4 ft. 8 in.). Their skin is copper brown in color.

---

114 * The author a business man, lived in Tumaco (southwest Colombia) for 35 years (1895-1930) and was German Vice-Consul for the Departamento Nariño from 1907 to 1920. Although he never actually visited Cayapa villages, he did have occasions to see and question groups of them "many hundreds of times," on their frequent visits to Tumaco. Apart from this, several of his employees have been in Cayapa villages and have given him reports. (K. Th. Preuss).

2: Murra E-4 (no date) 1943 SD6 Cayapa SD6

THE CAYAPA AND COLORADO

By JOHN MURRA

INTRODUCTION

The *Cayapa* and the *Colorado* are the last surviving Indian groups in the lush western lowlands of Ecuador (maps 1 and 6). Once an area of extensive Indian occupation, western Ecuador is now inhabited by a Spanish-speaking population of mixed Indian, Negro, and white ancestry, known as montuvios. The *Cayapa* and *Colorado* have precariously managed to hang on to their jungle homes. Speaking closely related if mutually unintelligible languages of the *Barbacoan* division of the *Chibchan* family, they represent the southernmost extension of that major division. Comparative studies with other *Chibchan*-speaking groups in Highland and eastern Colombia, with *Quechua*-speaking Indians in Highland Ecuador, and with various Montaña groups should prove of considerable culture-historical interest.

THE CAYAPA

The *Cayapa* are a riverain people inhabiting the lowlands of northwestern Ecuador. Sprinkled through the jungles of Esmeraldas Province, an area of difficult colonization and control, they managed for centuries to avoid the enslavement suffered by their Highland neighbors or the ethnic annihilation of most Coast aborigines. Only in the past few decades have their settlements been pushed back into the hills by Spanish-speaking montuvio and Negro homesteaders. World War II requirements in balsa wood, rubber, and other tropical commodities have accelerated this process of displacement and acculturation.

The Cayapa River and its affluents, from the mouth of the Anzole to the foot of the Andes, are the main area of *Cayapa* settlement. Barrett (1925) found three concentration spots: Punta Venado, Sapayo Grande, and San Miguel, corresponding to three political, tribal divisions, which might since have shifted or amalgamated. In addition, small groups of *Cayapa*, in various degrees of acculturation, are found in the Santiago Valley and along the coast into Colombia. Estimates of their numbers vary but hover around a mean of 2,000.

The chief source and authority on the *Cayapa* remains S. A. Barrett's monograph (1925). Barrett visited them in 1908–9, long enough to bring

2: Murra E-4 (no date) 1943 SD6 Cayapa SD6

●114 back an exhaustive account of their subsistence pattern and material culture as well as considerable data on religion and ceremonial life. According to modern interests, the report is weak in life-cycle data and economics, and a serious drawback is the almost complete lack of comparative considerations. Moreover, it describes a culture with marked European influences. Nevertheless, at this writing, it remains one of our most complete accounts of an aboriginal South American group. The remaining titles in the bibliography refer to linguistic treatises, hearsay accounts, and phantasies of hurried travelers.

The inaccessibility of their habitat facilitated the *Cayapa's* survival into the 20th century, but it also prevented most chroniclers from visiting their land. Early references to naked and painted Indians living along the Patia River in large houses on tall poles and wearing gold ornaments might refer to the *Cayapa* or to some other *Chibchan* people. Jijón y Caamaño (1940–45, vol. 2) has reproduced fragments from an unpublished Cabello Balboa chronicle discussing the people of Esmeraldas Province during the 16th century. Among the peoples figuring prominently in Cabello Balboa's report are the *Nigua*, an Indian group inhabiting traditional *Cayapa* territory. Jijón y Caamaño's suggestion (1940–45, vol. 2) that the *Nigua* and *Cayapa* are one people seems tentatively acceptable.

Both peoples claimed to have descended from the Andean Highlands, though it is unclear if they were refugees from the *Inca* or Spanish invasions. As reported by Barrett, this tradition is very strong even now, four centuries after the Conquest, permeating various divergent activities of the *Cayapa*, who date many techniques and artifacts in terms of pre- or post-migration practices. In 1907 Beuchat and Rivet had pointed to toponymic and archeological similarities between Esmeraldas Province and the *Cara* country in the Highlands. Later work by Jijón y Caamaño (1912, 1919, 1940–45, vol. 2) has strengthened the case for *Chibchan* affiliation of the *Cara* language and given a measure of confirmation to native tradition.

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

241 [311] Agriculture is the main occupation of the *Cayapa*, although fishing and hunting supply a large percentage of their food. Each house is surrounded by clearings and fields, and additional clearings are customarily made away from the river, in the bush. Most families have fields of plantains, bananas, sugarcane, coca, and sweet manioc (yuca); in addition, cotton, tobacco, maize, yams, and pineapples are frequently cultivated. Many wild plants are encouraged through weeding and other care.

241 [262] [230] Plantains (pl. 60, *bottom, right*) form the staple food of the *Cayapa*, and each family will have several acres planted to this perennially ripening fruit. Bananas are fed to the hogs and cover an acreage almost as large as that of the plantain.

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

PREFACE

THE information contained in this volume was obtained during the period from July, 1908, to April, 1909, when the author lived with the Cayapa Indians of northwestern Ecuador. This work was suggested to Mr George G. Heye by Prof. Marshall H. Saville, when he found the rich archeological deposits at La Tolita, near the mouth of Rio Santiago, and was undertaken for the purpose of obtaining information with which to solve certain problems connected with the highly developed prehistoric art in pottery and metalwork shown especially in and about the mounds at La Tolita. The results of the present research have failed to give any clew to the manufacturers of these archeological objects, owing to the great antiquity of the culture represented by them and to the fact that the Cayapa Indians are comparatively recent immigrants into this region. However, many interesting and important observations concerning the ethnology of the region were made, and the results of these are here offered as a contribution to the ethnology of this hitherto little known region of northwestern South America. Forming as they did a part of the field research of the Marie Antoinette Heye Expedition, the studies whose results are the subject of the present work were due to Mrs Heye's interest and generous patronage.

The author left San Francisco in June, 1908, so calculating the time of his journey as to connect, via New Orleans and Colon, with a vessel of the Pacific Naviga-

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

tion Company at Panama for Esmeraldas. Owing, however. to the irregularity of schedule along this western coast, it was necessary to remain a fortnight in Panama until the next steamer sailed. The arrival of this vessel from the south brought a welcome visit from Professor Saville, who, returning from a summer's archeological research in Ecuador, was able to give further valued information concerning the region to be visited and the encouraging news that health conditions there were then favorable.

Finally. after a voyage of five days, with the usual stops at Buenaventura and Tumaco, our vessel dropped anchor in the harbor of Esmeraldas, where the author was warmly greeted by Mr George D. Hedian, American consular agent at Esmeraldas. Mr Hedian had known Professor Saville for three years and had participated with him in the archeological expedition of the previous summer. His cordial interest, therefore, was threefold: that of a consul, that of a coworker, and, above all. that interest born of whole-souled friendship, as was amply proved throughout the author's stay in the region, and especially evidenced by his fraternal kindness in times of illness and on many other occasions. Mr Hedian's good advice concerning methods of travel and health precautions. and his kind offices in arranging matters of business concerning the expedition, were a result of long residence in the region and of thorough knowledge of the country and its people. The writer takes this opportunity to express his personal appreciation of Mr Hedian's many courtesies.

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

It seemed best for the writer to remain in Esmeraldas for about a week in order to recuperate from a slight fever contracted at Tumaco during a canoe trip of a few hours to inspect the mounds on El Morro island in the bay of Tumaco. During this week he also had an opportunity to meet all the people of importance in Esmeraldas, the capital and chief city of the province of the same name, and to outfit so far as was necessary for the trip up the Rio Cayapas. Among others the author met the Governor of the province, who kindly gave him letters of recommendation to the local teniente politico at La Tola.

Finally, passage was obtained for La Tolita on a balandra, or small sloop. The author was accompanied by Mr Hedian, who had arranged his affairs in order to accompany him among the Indians and to see that he was properly introduced to some of their head-men.

After a journey of two days we disembarked at La Tolita, where we were hospitably received by Señor Don Pablo I. Sánchez, owner of the hacienda, and by Señor Don Calixto Ramírez, his business manager. Both of these estimable Spanish gentlemen facilitated in every way the work of the expedition, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge their many kindnesses. Mention must also be made of the tender care given the author during illness by these two and by Señora Sánchez, Señor Don Maximiliano Sánchez, and Señor Don Manuel. Acknowledgment should also be made to these friends for their interest in obtaining a considerable collection of pottery and stone objects from

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

114 La Tolita mines, which were presented to the author for the collections of what later became the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

This opportunity is taken to acknowledge also our indebtedness to Señor Don Donato Yannuzzelli, of Palma, and to his brother Señor Don Antonio Yannuzzelli, of Esmeraldas, as also to Messrs Dumarest Brothers and others for various favors which contributed to the success of our undertaking.

After several days spent in preparation at La Tolita, we embarked on our canoe trip up the Rio Cayapas, arriving on the second day at the house of Señor Don José Trejo, Secretario de la Gobernación of the Punta Venado division of the Cayapa, who, on being assured that we were not connected with some new mining project, cheerfully permitted us to establish camp in his cane-mill on the bank of the river opposite his house.

After remaining two days, Mr Hedian returned down the river, leaving the author to establish further friendly relations which would enable him to prosecute his investigations to advantage. By care and diplomacy the Indians were convinced that the expedition was not secretly prospecting for mining properties, and that there was no danger of interference with their lands and liberties. In due time, therefore, friendly relations were effected, especially with Don José, and with Señor Don Antonio Nupa, head chief, or gobernador, of the Punta Venado division; and ultimately the confidence of the latter particularly, and of various others, was gained to such an extent that it was possible to procure

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

the desired information concerning the entire culture of the Cayapa people, given in detail in this volume, as well as notes on the language which will appear later. It is fitting that acknowledgment be made here to the Cayapa Indians for their generous hospitality and assistance, contrary to the rule obtaining in North America, almost wholly without direct compensation other than a little medical aid now and then. Especially should acknowledgment be made to their chief, Don Antonio, who made the author virtually a member of his household, and who, together with the other members of his family, facilitated the investigation in every way.

The plates in this volume were reproduced from negatives made by the author in the field and from photographs of specimens collected while the work was in progress and now in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. A similar collection was gathered at the same time for the Königlicher Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. The drawings of the objects in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, were made by Mr Rudolph Weber and Mr William Rinaker of New York, and Mr George Peter of Milwaukee.

The detail map of the Cayapa region is based on Banares's map, made for the provincial government, bearing the title "Plano Topográfico del Río Cayapas y sus Principales Afluentes Levantado en Diciembre de 1892 por Santiago M. Banares, Ingeniero de la Comisión Exploradora." The Governor of the Province of Esmeraldas courteously permitted the author to make a copy of this map, which proved very useful in

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

many ways. Investigation showed, however, that the map is not entirely correct in certain details; but these imperfections were adjusted on the copy, and further additions were made from a map placed at the disposal of the Museum by the courtesy of the American Geographical Society of New York.

The elaboration of the results of the field work into their final form has been accomplished under many difficulties, since in large measure it has been necessary to perform the task at odd moments after the author's regular duties as a museum curator were finished day by day. Furthermore, the absence of an adequate library within easy reach has added to the difficulties. Acknowledgment is made to The Field Museum of Natural History, of Chicago, for the special privilege of consulting, on Sundays, its books dealing with South America, these being the only days it was possible to visit Chicago for the purpose.

The author takes this opportunity to express his appreciation of the hearty cooperation and of the many valuable suggestions of Professor Saville and of the late George H. Pepper in the preparation of this work; and especially does he wish to acknowledge his gratitude to Mr Heye for his constant encouragement and sympathetic interest.

S. A. Barrett

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

General Characteristics

The measurements of seventy individuals which follow were made during the last days of the stay among the Cayapa. On departing from New York for this region no anthropometric instruments were available, and arrangements were made to have a set sent later. However, month after month having passed without the arrival of the instruments, it became necessary, near the latter part of the stay, to make them. Through the kindness of Señor Don Donato Vanonnelli, owner of the Hacienda of Palma, the author was enabled to make a serviceable measuring rod in the shops connected with Señor Vanonnelli's sawmill. For this purpose a thoroughly seasoned piece of hardwood called in Spanish guayacan was procured and sized with exactness. This was then carefully graduated with a metric rule and when provided with a spring-arm made a serviceable instrument.

Care was always taken to keep the rod from getting wet or subject to conditions that would tend to change its length. After the completion of the measurements the rod was proved with metric rules to make sure that no change in length had taken place. This rod, a pair of calipers lent by Señor Vanonnelli, and a small thirty-centimeter rule, provided the instruments necessary for the work, and it was possible with these in a short time to procure the measurements here presented.

In the majority of cases the Indians submitted readily to measurement, and had more time been available it

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD 6 Cayapa SD6

would have been possible to obtain a much more complete series. However, with this series of seventy measurements, of which thirty-six represent males and thirty-four females (including nineteen adult males and twenty-one adult females), it is possible to arrive at a fairly clear conception of the physical characteristics of the Cayapa as a tribe. These measurements and the indices computed from them appear in tabular form in the following pages.

The tables of measurements and indices show that the Cayapa on the whole are short in stature, the men averaging only 155 cm. and the women only 146 cm. The range of individual variation among the men, as also among the women, is 14 cm. Among the men there are at least a few individuals who appeared to be somewhat taller than the maximum here given, but as a tribe the Cayapa must be considered somewhat below the average in stature. The difference in stature between men and women is 11.27 cm.; that is to say, the men are 7.7 percent. taller than the women. Considering the fact that the Cayapa as a tribe are low in stature, this is a high percentage. In fact in most races of low stature this difference usually approaches 5 percent. of the female stature. Larger series would probably alter these results somewhat, but it seems probable that they would remain substantially the same since the individuals measured, of both sexes, were about the average of the tribe as a whole.

According to the averages of the cephalic indices of all four classes, men, boys, women, and girls, the Cayapa are clearly brachycephalic. Further, when the indi-

Cayapa and Colorado and thereby systematically proved the relationship that had always been assumed on purely inspectional grounds (Moore 1962). The most recent classification proposed by Greenberg places Cayapa-Colorado within the sub family called Paezan, which together with Chibchan proper belongs to the Macro-Chibchan family (Greenberg 1956). This classification is similar to that proposed by Mason (Mason 1950:180). A claim that Cayapa is closely related to Mayan is proposed by Professor Aquiles R. Perez T; however, the documentation is not convincing at present (Perez 1960: 491-494).

History. The first actually reliable information on the Cayapa comes from the pen of W. B. Stevenson, who visited them briefly in 1809. At that time, there was but one group of Cayapa (those who lived in the vicinity of Punta Venado). The chief, or alcalde, as Stevenson called him, carried a "baston, insignia of authority" which he presented to Stevenson. He then ordered the Indians to obey Stevenson ". . . and they advanced one after another to kiss the head of the baston, and accompanied me to the house of the alcalde, which was

situated about thirty yards from the river side" (Stevenson 1829:409). Unfortunately, Stevenson's description of Cayapa life was meager, for he was much more interested in the Malába, a group of reputedly wild Indians who lived along the Río San Miguel, a tributary of the Río Cayapas. The Cayapa were as loathe to visit the Malába as Stevenson was eager to do so. After some hesitation, the alcalde, having been promised various gifts, ordered two men to take Stevenson up river. It is of considerable interest to note that the Cayapa chief had sufficient authority to order two of his people to accompany Stevenson into the land of the "savage" Malába. Stevenson reported that the Malába were quite gentle and that they spoke a variant of Quechua, a language spoken throughout the Andes from Ecuador to Peru and Bolivia. The Malába no longer exist as an ethnic group; however, this is the term used by the present day Cayapa to designate a group of evil spirits that dwell somewhere in the monte or bush.

It would appear, given the position of the Cayapa near the lower reaches of the Río Cayapas and the Malába at its upper reaches, that the migration of the Cayapa from their ancient Andean homeland as stated in

601
178

> It is in respect to residence that changes in economy, technology, property, government, or religion first alter the structural relationships of related individuals to one another, giving an impetus to subsequent modifications in forms of the family. . . . and in kinship terminology (Murdock 1949:202).

[114]

Murdock analyzed Barrett's kinship data and concluded that the Cayapa possess a bi-Eskimo system and that there is an incipient transition toward normal Hawaiian reflected in alternative niece and cousin terms. (Murdock 1949:228 table 61). My own data reveal an Iroquois type cousin terminology as defined by Murdock (Murdock 1949:223)! Barrett records /maŋgúku/ (written phonemically by the writer) for both the father's sister and the mother's sister. My own data show /maŋgúku/ to be restricted to the mother's sister, while the term /un^{y}ún^{y}u/ is used for the father's sister. Similarly, in Barrett's material the father's brother is equated with the mother's brother under three alternative terms: /apíku/, /apípi/, /yapípi/, whereas we recorded these terms only for the father's brother, while the mother's brother is called /ahčíyu/. The terms, /un^{y}ún^{y}u/ 'father's sister' and /ahčíyu/ are discussed by Barrett:

601

in-laws grandparents. By reversing Barrett's statement in line with this simple observation it can be said that the primary meaning of /ančápa/is 'father-in-law' and secondarily and tenuously, 'grandfather.'

611
591

Descent is today still bi-lateral, and residence is still bi-local with neo-locality as a very common alternate. Murdock in discussing incest taboos and their extensions placed the Cayapa in class B2-M1-P1.

582
114

> B2. Minimal Bilateral Extension.--marriage forbidden or disapproved with all first cousins but permitted with at least some second cousins.
> M1. Matrilineal Non-Extension--absence of any tendency to extend marriage prohibitions further in the female line than in any other.
> P1. Patrilineal Non-Extension--absence of any tendency to extend prohibitions further in the male line than in any other (Murdock 1949: 302-303).

Murdock in this classification went beyond the data presented by Barrett; the Cayapa should have been classified in the category of Normal Bilateral Extension. Kindreds are unreported by Barrett, but are established in our data. There are two terms which may be translated as 'family' or 'kindred,' /pándatála/, /pánda/ 'food, plantain,' /-tála/ 'together,' and /búlutála/. Maximino Mendoza Añapa's father's brother brought him a woman to marry, but Maximino refused, saying that she is /lála búlutalába/ 'we-family-together-with.' The

612
582

584
627

of the would-be bridegroom notified Arcilio who, in turn, sent Bardonero Cimarrón who is 'family' to the bridegroom to demand that the girl be delivered. Kalía also remonstrated with his mother. Finally, she stated that as long as the girl seemed to be pregnant, she would agree to the marriage.

Not only did the mother flout the authority of the /ún^{y}i/, it is very likely that if she had been strongly adamant, she would perhaps have been whipped, but she would have kept her daughter. The matter of marriage commissions is most intriguing. Clearly, this sort of match-making could not take place in a society in which there were strong corporate bodies, where family extensions were important. In a society as loosely structured as is the Cayapa, the marriage commissions could rove the countryside with a minimum of interference.

587
[114]

Widows and Widowers. Max Heiman states that widows and widowers never remarry among the Cayapa (Heiman 1931:287). My studies among the Cayapa fail completely to substantiate Heiman's statement. In point of fact, most widows and widowers remarry, the only

[582]